NCVER

Employers' use and views of the VET system 2023: technical notes

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

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Introduction

Employers' Use and Views of the VET System 2023 provides a summary of employers' use and views of the vocational education and training (VET) system and focuses on employer engagement and satisfaction with both accredited and unaccredited training. The figures are derived from the 2023 Survey of Employers' Use and Views of the VET System. The survey collects information on the various ways employers meet their skill needs. This may include accredited training such as hiring staff with vocational qualifications, employing apprentices and trainees, or providing staff with nationally recognised training other than through apprenticeships and traineeships. Employers can also utilise or provide unaccredited and other forms of training. The results relate to employers' training experiences over the previous 12 months.

This document provides information about the 2023 Survey of Employers' Use and Views of the VET System, including how data are reported.

Scope

All organisations in Australia with at least one employee are in scope of the survey. For this survey, an employee is defined as "a person working in, or operating from, this organisation including full time, part time and casual employees." An owner/operator is not classed as an employee, regardless of whether they pay themselves a wage.

The following organisations are out of scope of the survey:

- self-employed and not employing staff
- private households employing staff
- foreign diplomatic missions
- consulates in Australia
- defence force establishments
- superannuation funds.

The survey respondent was generally the manager responsible for staff training at the workplace. If there was more than one manager then the most senior manager was asked to respond, and if there was no manager responsible for training, personnel, staff development or human resources, then the manager of the organisation was asked to respond.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to measure the engagement and satisfaction of employers with three key areas of the VET system:

1. the requirement that employees have a vocational qualification,

2. apprenticeships and traineeships, and

3. nationally recognised training other than apprenticeships and traineeships.

Data on employers' use and satisfaction with unaccredited training were also collected for comparative purposes.

On initial contact, employers were asked a series of screening questions to determine whether they were in-scope of the survey. Only those in-scope of the survey were asked to complete it.

All employers were asked a set of core questions of approximately five minutes in length on their engagement and satisfaction with the VET system. These employers were then split into two groups, and each asked a different set of questions. The first group answered questions on their choice of provider, the second group provided information on employers' training choices and reasons for dissatisfaction.

All key questions remained unchanged from the 2021 survey to allow for time series analysis.

Questions that were removed in 2023 were those included in the COVID module in 2021 as they were deemed not applicable in 2023. These questions were:

- whether the number of employees undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships differed from previous years

- whether the organisation had employees undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships in previous years

- whether the changes in the number of employees undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships was due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- whether the number of employees undertaking nationally recognised training differed from previous years

- whether the organisation had employees undertaking nationally recognised training in previous years

- whether the changes in the number of employees undertaking nationally recognised training was due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- whether the organisation had new training requirements due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- why the organisation had new training requirements

- key areas of training that new requirements covered

- types of training used to meet new requirements due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- reasons for choosing types of training to meet new requirements

- whether training priorities for the next 12 months are different to those of the last 12 months due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- reasons training priorities different for the next 12 months due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- whether the organisation expects the amount of training they will provide in the next 12 months to change

- reasons the organisation expects the amount of training to change in the next 12 months.

The questions added in 2023 were last asked in 2019. They were removed from the 2021 questionnaire to allow for the questions in the COVID module. The questions reintroduced in 2023 were:

- reasons the organisation had apprentices or trainees in last 12 months

- types of organisations who conducted the formal training for apprentices or trainees

- reasons for choosing main type of training provider for apprenticeships or traineeships

- reasons the organisation had employees undertake nationally recognised training in last 12 months

- types of organisations who conducted the nationally recognised training for employees

- reasons for choosing main type of training provider for nationally recognised training

- reasons the organisation had employees undertake unaccredited training in last 12 months.

Survey data

The 2023 survey collected information from employers about:

- Organisational characteristics (Part A)

- Skill needs and formal vocational qualifications (Part C)

- Training requirements (Part D)

- Apprenticeships and Traineeships (Part E)

- Nationally Recognised Training (Part F)

- Unaccredited training (Part G)

- Anything further (Part H).

For each type of training (Parts E, F, G) employers were asked:

- Types of training providers used to conduct the training (not Part G)

- Types of training providers used to conduct the **majority** of training

- Reasons for choosing main type of provider (not Part G)

- Satisfaction with aspects of training from the main provider (not Part G)

- Overall satisfaction with training

- Reasons for dissatisfaction (not Part G).

A copy of the questionnaire can be found at https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/employers-use-and-views-of-the-vet-system-2023.

The data items collected across the surveys from 2005 to 2023 are shown in Attachment B. Table B1 shows the data items collected from 2005 to 2011 and Table B2 shows those items collected from 2013 to 2023.

Reference periods

Employers were asked to provide information with respect to two reference periods.

The first period was the *last 12 months*. Employers were asked to supply information on whether they had employees who required vocational qualifications as a job requirement, whether they had used apprentices or trainees and whether they had provided or arranged any nationally recognised training or unaccredited training.

The second period was the *last pay period*. Employers were asked to supply the total number of employees working in or operating from the organisation that received pay in the last pay period.

Survey methodology

Sample design and frame

The sample for the 2023 survey was sourced from a commercial provider of business sample, namely illion. illion is a provider of credit checking and business intelligence. Its database of businesses covers almost 500,000 organisations in Australia and is regularly updated using automated and personalised techniques. Their database is drawn from a variety of sources which broadly fall under three core categories: customer-sourced, commercially sourced and public record data. This source was also used for the 2021 survey.

The sampling frame for the 2005 to 2019 surveys, used the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Business Register. For these previous iterations, the sample was provided by the ABS, drawn from the ABS Business Register (ABR).

Organisations in-scope of the survey were randomly selected and stratified by:

- state (each of the 8 states and territories)

- industry (19 ANZSIC divisions)

- employer size (small = 1-9 employees, medium = 10-99 employees, large = 100 or more employees).

NCVER designed the survey sample to include only in-scope organisations; that is organisations in Australia with one or more employees. The sample was designed to achieve the accuracy levels shown in table 1 for seven key survey indicators (table 2). It was expected these levels of accuracy could be achieved if 6150 employers responded from a list of 58 500 businesses supplied from illion.

Table 1   Desired accuracy levels of key indicators from the 2023 survey

Level	Desired margins of error on estimates of proportions
Australia	2%
State	5%
Industry (ANZSIC 06)	10%
Employer size group	6%

Table 2   Key survey indicators used in the design of the 2023 sample

Key survey indicator
Engagement with vocational education and training system
Engagement with formal vocational qualifications
Engagement with apprenticeships/traineeships
Engagement with nationally recognised training
Satisfaction with formal vocational qualifications
Satisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships
Satisfaction with nationally recognised training

Fieldwork

The 2023 survey was conducted both online and using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) between March and June 2023. Wallis Social Research conducted the survey on behalf of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). A total of 6290 responses were achieved, with telephone interviews averaging 12.0 minutes in length and online completion taking 8.0 minutes on average.

Fieldwork was conducted in two phases. Sampled employers were sent a personalised letter and brochure approximately two weeks before initial telephone contact to allow enough time for the letter to reach the appropriate person and to give time for those who wanted to complete the survey online to do so. The letter and brochures were sent in four separate batches throughout the fieldwork period to ensure that employers were contacted in a timely manner. A copy of the letter and brochure can be found at https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/employers-use-and-views-of-the-vet-system-2023.

The letter provided login details for the employer to complete the survey online. The letter and brochure were also used to reassure potential respondents of the legitimacy of the survey, provide definitions of the terms used in the survey, and ultimately maximise the response rate. A 1800 (free call) number was also set up and details printed on the letter and brochure for respondents to call to obtain further information about the survey, make an appointment for interview, or opt out of the survey. The survey was open between March and June 2023. Reminder emails and SMSs were sent to encourage employers to complete the survey. In 2023, refusal conversion, which is where a respondent who initially refuses to participate is recontacted to try and gain an interview, was carried out. These interviews were carried out by more experienced interviewers.

Weighting

All percentages published have been derived based on stated responses. As the survey was undertaken as a sample rather than a census, responses have been weighted to represent population benchmarks of in-scope organisations from the ABS Business Register at the time of sampling. In order to represent the ABS

population benchmarks, two weighting stages were applied. First the data were adjusted for non-response using the illion population (used as the sampling frame) and then weighted to the ABS population benchmarks using the following stratification variables:

- state (each of the 8 states and territories)

- industry (19 ANZSIC divisions)

- employer size (small = 1-9 employees, medium = 10-99 employees, large = 100 or more employees).

Weighting removes sample bias with respect to state, industry and employer size and so all survey estimates should be based on weighted counts when tabulations are produced.

Survey response

Details of the responses and response rate achieved at the national level for the 2023 survey are shown in table 3. The response rate is calculated as the number of responses achieved divided by the number of in-scope organisations. Out-of-scope selections comprise employers that did not have any employees, if the business had closed down, if there was a disconnected number, wrong number, engaged, no answer or answering machine, if there were language or capability problems or if the contact details were for the businesses tax agent.

Table 3   Survey response summary, all employers, 2023

	Employers	
Survey response	n	%
Employers selected	59 000	NA
Sample issued to field	58 957	NA
Total determined in-scope	**15 744**	**100.0**
Responded	6290	40.0
Did not respond	9454	60.0
Refused	3816	24.2
Relevant person not available	5638	35.8

The number of responses and response rates by state (table 4), employer size (table 5), and industry (table 6) are shown below.

Table 4   Survey responses and response rates by state, all employers, 2023

State	Telephone responses n	Online responses n	Total responses n	Response rate %
New South Wales	882	752	1634	35.6
Victoria	765	626	1391	37.9
Queensland	611	512	1123	39.7
South Australia	218	179	397	42.9
Western Australia	406	313	719	44.5
Tasmania	228	155	383	50.2
Northern Territory	234	86	320	47.9
Australian Capital Territory	211	112	323	46.7
Australia	**3555**	**2735**	**6290**	**40.0**

Table 5   Survey responses and response rates by employer size, all employers, 2023

Employer size (Number of employees)	Telephone responses n	Online responses n	Total responses n	Response rate %
1 – 9	2390	1690	4080	39.2
10 – 99	891	795	1686	43.7
100 +	274	250	524	35.1
Australia	**3555**	**2735**	**6290**	**40.0**

Table 6 Survey responses and response rates by industry, all employers, 2023

Industry (ANZSIC06)	Telephone responses n	Online responses n	Total responses n	Response rate %
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	69	57	126	51.9
Mining	54	37	91	43.1
Manufacturing	292	234	526	40.2
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	66	34	100	42.2
Construction	416	312	728	39.5
Wholesale trade	200	128	328	34.5
Retail trade	363	221	584	37.2
Accommodation and food services	235	135	370	41.4
Transport, postal and warehousing	74	66	140	33.5
Information media and telecommunications	56	44	100	39.2
Finance and insurance services	71	46	117	28.8
Rental, hiring and real estate services	80	69	149	30.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	523	389	912	38.0
Administrative and support services	108	76	184	44.0
Public administration and safety	57	70	127	50.8
Education and training	162	157	319	49.3
Health care and social assistance	294	280	574	39.0
Arts and recreation services	108	107	215	48.3
Other services	327	273	600	46.7
Australia	**3555**	**2735**	**6290**	**40.0**

Fieldwork for both 2021 and 2023 proved challenging, in that it was difficult to establish contact with the right person to complete the survey, which impacted both the number of telephone interviews and telephone-prompted online surveys completed. It is suspected that much of the workforce continues to work from home, with work colleagues reluctant to forward calls to personal phones or disclose personal numbers, and employees reluctant to answer calls from unknown numbers on their personal phones.

Privacy

All employers were assured of complete confidentiality. No information has or will be released in a way that will enable the identification of any individual employer or respondent. Name and address details of the employer and respondent were used only by the fieldwork contractor during the process of the initial mail out and the interview and have not and will not be given to any other persons, organisations or departments. The fieldwork contractor worked with a small number of external service providers to administer the survey. Companies providing printing and collation services were provided with the employers' contact details for the purpose of administering the survey. Any contact details of employers and respondents held by the fieldwork contractor or their external service providers for the purpose of this survey were destroyed upon conclusion of the project.

For more information refer to: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/seuv/survey-of-australian-employers-2023-privacy-notice

Reliability of estimates

Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a survey: non-sampling error and sampling error. Non-sampling error may occur for reasons such as non-response bias, incorrect responses, interviewer errors, attrition and processing errors. Non-response bias occurs when the characteristics of those not responding to the survey differ to those responding to the survey in relation to the variables or items of interest. Non-response can affect the reliability of results and can introduce bias.

Sampling error occurs because estimates are calculated from a sample of the population, rather than the entire population. The estimates may differ from the true population value (that is, the value if the whole population had been sampled and responded to the survey) as well from estimates that would be produced if a different sample had by chance been selected.

NCVER uses a 95% confidence level to judge the amount of sampling error in an estimate. The confidence interval for an estimate is calculated using the formula:

$$\text{estimate} \pm 1.96 \times \text{SE}$$

where SE is the standard error of the estimate returned by SAS software (the standard error is an estimate of how much variation there is expected to be in a published estimate from one sample to another, based on the randomness of sample selection), taking into account the sampling design and population size. The chance that a 95% confidence interval contains the true population value is 19 in 20.

The half-width of the confidence interval, "1.96×SE", is often referred to as the *margin of error*.

Data tables include information on each type of training by state, industry and employer size, as well as the margin of error. The margin of error allows data users to view the amount of certainty (or error) in a reported measure sourced from information provided by a sample rather than a population.

For further information refer to the Fact sheet: interpreting survey results, available at https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/employers-use-and-views-of-the-vet-system-2023.

Data comparability

This is the tenth time the survey has been conducted in this form. Previous surveys were conducted in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021. The majority of data items between these earlier surveys and the 2023 survey are directly comparable. A review of the survey content and methodology was conducted in 2011. The review resulted in a number of changes to data items collected in the 2013 survey and subsequent surveys closely mirror that survey. However, a set of core data items (employer engagement and satisfaction with various aspects of the VET system) remained the same to allow for time series comparisons across the surveys.

Previous employer surveys conducted in 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2001 focussed on employer satisfaction with recently hired VET graduates. Because of this difference in focus, there are no comparative data available between these earlier surveys and the 2005 and subsequent surveys. Further details regarding the history of the survey can be found at Attachment A.

Note that the standard industry classification (ANZSIC) changed in 2006. Data from the 2005 survey is only available using the old industry classification (ANZSIC93). Data from the 2007 and 2009 surveys are available using both the old and new industry classifications. Data from the 2011 survey onwards are only available using the new industry classification (ANZSIC06).

Attachment A: History of the Survey

A survey measuring employers' views of the VET system has been conducted biennially since 1995, with the exception of 2003. Since it was first conducted, the survey has undergone several name changes. These are shown in the table below.

Table 1   Surveys used to measure employers' views of the VET System

Year	Name
2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023	Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System
1999 and 2001	Survey of Employer Views on VET
1995 and 1997	Employer Satisfaction Survey

The methodology and content of the survey have also changed over time. Prior to 2005, there was little consistency between surveys with respect to both content and methodology. For these earlier surveys, the focus also differed from year to year. Surveys from 2005 to 2011 had the same focus, with only minor content changes to maintain the time series. A major review of the survey was conducted in 2012, which resulted in changes to the methodology and content of the survey for the 2013 survey. In 2019, an online option was added to the survey to allow respondents the choice of completing the survey either via a telephone interview or online in their own time. In 2021, the survey sampling frame changed, and some questions were removed to accommodate a module on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employers' training choices and their future training plans. The 2023 survey used the same sampling frame as the 2021 survey. In addition, the COVID questions were removed, and a number of the questions deleted in 2021 were re-introduced.

Purpose

The employer survey was developed to measure the performance of the VET sector. Over the past decade, Australian federal and state governments established a comprehensive set of objectives for the national VET system as well as key performance measures (KPMs) to monitor progress against those objectives. The employer survey was initially developed to report against KPM 3, which was to monitor Australian employers' views on the relevance and usefulness of skills acquired through VET and their satisfaction with the system. It should be noted that the first survey, in 1995, was conducted before the final KPMs were fully formulated and endorsed.

In 2004, the KPMs changed as part of the new National Strategy for the VET System 2004-10 ("Shaping our Future"). KPM 3 was revised to monitor 'the level of employer adoption of, and satisfaction with, vocational education and training in meeting the skill needs of their workforce'. Given this change in focus, there are no comparative data available between these earlier surveys and those conducted from 2005 onwards.

The KPMs for the VET sector were superseded by the new National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD), focusing on outcomes and outputs, and set new performance measures for the VET sector. Information on employer satisfaction from the survey is used to measure progress against the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD). Employer engagement and satisfaction with the VET system are also reported in the Report on Government Services (RoGS).

Scope

The scope of the survey has changed substantially over the years. The first two surveys (1995 and 1997) covered only employers of recent VET graduates. From 1999 onwards, the scope was expanded to include all employers with at least one employee. For 2001, although all employers with one or more employees were in scope, the employer population was divided into sub-groups for data collection and dissemination. All employers were asked about their training practices and general views on VET. Only employers of recent VET graduates were asked about their views on specific aspects of VET delivery.

From 2005, all employers were asked questions about the types of training they did/did not provide and were grouped under the headings of providing nationally recognised training, having formal vocational qualifications as a job requirement, and employing apprentices/trainees.

Sampling

Between 1995 and 2001, an electronic business listing was used as the sampling frame for the survey. From 2005 - 2019, the survey sample was selected from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Business Register (ABR). For the 2021 and 2023 surveys, a change of process was implemented, whereby the sample was sourced from a commercial provider of business sample, namely illion. illion (formerly Dunn and Bradstreet) is a provider of credit checking and business intelligence. Its database of businesses covers almost 500 000 organisations in Australia and is constantly updated using automated and personalised techniques. Their database is drawn from a variety of sources which broadly fall under three core categories: customer-sourced, commercially sourced and public record data.

In all years, the sample for the survey has been selected at random, and stratified by state, industry, and employer size.

Data collection

In 1995, two methods were used to collect data from the employers depending on the size of the business. Information from large businesses was collected by face-to-face interview, while a telephone interview was conducted with smaller businesses. Both managers and supervisors of VET graduates were surveyed. Interviewing multiple people within an organisation produced complex data. For subsequent surveys, the methodology was simplified so that only one person, the manager responsible for staff training, was interviewed within an organisation. From 1997 to 2017 the survey was conducted by computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) only. From 2019 an online option was added that allowed employers to complete the survey in their own time. The CATI option was also still available.

The current survey (2005 onwards)

The current survey was developed to better capture employers' views and levels of engagement with the VET system for reporting against KPM 3 and subsequently the NASWD. Survey outputs were redeveloped by reviewing the existing survey content and methodology, and through consultations with key stakeholders. This resulted in a change in focus from employers' satisfaction with skills of recent VET graduates to employers' satisfaction with different aspects of the VET system.

Since 2005, the survey has been conducted with the manager responsible for staff training.

From 2005-2019 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) was responsible for sample design and selection. The sample was designed to include only in-scope businesses; that is businesses from all eight states and

territories of Australia with one or more employees. From 2021, NCVER designed the survey sample and the fieldwork contractor worked with the commercial list provider (illion) to select the sample.

Sample Size

This is the tenth time the survey has been conducted in this form. The number of responses achieved for each of the surveys is shown in table 2.

Table 2   Number of responses achieved in the surveys from 2005-2023

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Responses achieved	4 601	4 701	5 244	7 500	9 052	9 210	8 022	7 007	5 615	6 290

Data items

For surveys conducted between 2005 and 2011, the majority of data items are directly comparable.

In 2012, NCVER conducted a review of the survey. As a result of the review, from the 2013 survey onwards:

- All employers have been asked a small set of core questions of approximately five minutes in length.

- Those employers are then split into two groups, and each asked a different set of questions. The first group answering questions on their choice of provider, with the second group providing information on employers' training choices and reasons for dissatisfaction. This is to minimise burden on respondents.

The core questions asked of all employers were included in previous iterations of the survey and are comparable with data collected between 2005 and 2011. Questions in the other groups are a mix of new and existing questions.

The 2021 questionnaire included a module to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employers' training requirements. A number of existing questions were removed from the survey to allow space for this module. This module was removed in 2023 and a number of the deleted questions in 2021 were re-introduced (these were last asked in 2019).

The data items collected across the surveys from 2005 to 2023 are shown in Attachment B. Table B1 shows the data items collected from 2005 to 2011 and Table B2 shows those items collected from 2013 to 2023.

Data are available by state, employer size and industry. The only exception results from a change to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) in 2006. Data from the 2007 and 2009 surveys were coded using both ANZSIC 1993 and ANZSIC 2006, those from the 2005 survey to ANZSIC 1993 only and those from the 2011 survey onwards to ANZSIC 2006 only (table 3).

Table 3   Standard used to classify industry (ANZSIC) from 2005-2023 surveys

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
ANZSIC 1993	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ANZSIC 2006	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Weighting

Up until 2021, the survey sample was drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Business Register and weighted back to the same population benchmarks. In 2021 and 2023, the sample was selected from the illion Business register. The responses were first weighted back to the illion dataset to adjust for non-response within stratums and then raked to the relevant in-scope population from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Business Register at the time of sampling. Despite taking steps to minimise the impact of the sampling change, there might be inevitable breaks in the series due to change in sampling frame.

Earlier surveys

Since it was first developed in 1995, the survey has grown steadily in size. Prior to 2005, the content of the survey differed from year to year. Similarities across the surveys were:

- The set of attitudinal statements and a measure of overall satisfaction with VET providers was collected consistently for the 1995 to 2001 surveys and provided the only comparable data over time[1].

- The surveys in 1997, 1999 and 2001 were consistent in their measurement of attitudes to technical and further education (TAFE) and non-TAFE providers. Employers with predominantly TAFE graduates were asked their views on TAFE providers and employers with predominantly non-TAFE graduates were asked for their views on non-TAFE providers. It provided a reasonable representation of views on each provider type because only 10% of employers had graduates from both TAFE and non-TAFE providers.

1995 Employer Satisfaction Survey

The scope of the 1995 survey was 'employers with at least one employee who had completed a VET qualification in the previous two years'. There were some problems identifying and finding the target population for this survey.

Businesses were selected from an electronic business listing and a two phased approach to interviewing used to collect the data. For small to medium sized businesses, a telephone interview was conducted with the manager/human resources manager, as well as an immediate supervisor of a VET graduate. For large employers, a face-to-face interview was conducted with the manager/human resources manager and telephone interviews conducted with up to three supervisors of VET graduates. The same questionnaire was used for all workplaces, only the method of administering them changed by size of the business.

In effect, there were two surveys: a 'manager survey' and a 'graduate supervisor survey'. The measurement of satisfaction at two levels resulted in a complex set of information. Managers were asked their opinions on the recent VET graduates as a group while supervisors were asked the same range of questions about, in each case, a particular recent VET graduate. Of note, is that in 69% of cases, the manager and the supervisor were the same person. This gave rise to questions on whether the added complexity and expense of the two levels of measurement was providing much value to the interpretation and meaning of survey results.

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1 There were initially 10 statements that increased to 12 in the 2001 survey.

For the 1995 survey, a total of 1999 interviews were completed. Data are available by state, employer size and industry.

1997 Employer Satisfaction Survey

The second survey, conducted in 1997, was also called the 'employer satisfaction survey'. It used a different questionnaire from the 1995 survey. The scope remained the same and the sample was again drawn from electronic business listings, however, the entire survey was conducted by telephone and only one person per organisation was interviewed. The questionnaire was structured around a set of 12 aspects of training delivery. In relation to each aspect of training, respondents were asked:

- their satisfaction levels for current delivery

- the level at which they would consider training to be excellent

- the level at which they would be dissatisfied enough to change providers.

One of the main reasons for adopting the method of asking about current delivery and comparing this with ideas of 'excellence' and 'dissatisfaction' was to use the data for 'gap analysis', i.e. to measure how far from excellence, or otherwise, current delivery might be at a point in time. Repeat surveys could monitor this over time. However, it was a very long survey and contained very complex concepts for respondents to deal with over the telephone. A post-survey review raised concerns about respondent fatigue and the impact on data quality, plus, very few of the key clients using the survey data undertook the gap analysis to monitor areas of improvement, mainly because the resulting data set was too complex.

A total of 2687 interviews with in-scope employers were completed. Data are available by state, employer size and industry.

1999 Survey of Employer Views on VET

A considerable amount of development work was undertaken for the 1999 survey. This included a review of the questionnaire content and an investigation of an alternative sampling frame. An application to use the ABR as the sampling frame for the survey was made, but approval was not granted.

The name of the survey changed to 'survey of employer views' reflecting the focus on 'perceptions' in the scales for excellent and current delivery rather than measuring actual levels of satisfaction.

The review of the questionnaire resulted in the same basic model as 1997 being retained, but it contained only the questions on employers' views of current delivery and their ideas of excellence. The set of attitudinal statements was also retained, as several of them had become key performance reporting elements in the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) annual report. In addition, there were two changes to the populations surveyed. First, the survey was expanded to include employers with no VET graduates, recent or otherwise. Second, the target population of employers with a recent VET graduate was divided in two. This latter change was made to distinguish between those employers who had direct experience of VET and those with VET graduates.

The review of the sample frame arose from two factors, the:

1 difficulty and cost of finding employers of recent VET graduates

2 availability of employers' details for a majority of graduates through the (then) Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), now the Student Outcomes Survey.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Statistical Consultancy Unit was engaged to advise whether information from the GDS could be used to create a sample frame and how this could be combined with a second frame from the electronic business listing.

The 1999 survey was conducted using the dual frame because of the potential cost savings envisaged in using the GDS to source employers of recent VET graduates. A post survey evaluation showed that the savings were not realised as the administrative work involved in preparing the GDS information for sample selection and the complexity of managing the two weighting processes eroded most of the savings. For this reason, it was decided to revert to a single frame from an electronic business listing for the 2001 employer survey.

A total of 6053 interviews were completed across the populations with employers with recent or no VET graduates. Data are available by state, employer size and industry.

2001 Survey of Employer Views on VET

In 2000, another major review of the survey content and methodology was conducted. The focus of this review was to consider whether the survey collected information in the most appropriate way for KPM 3. The main finding of the review was that the survey could focus better on KPM3 by collecting more information on specific graduate skills and this steered the change in content for the 2001 survey. As part of the review, a new focus and content for 2001 was agreed that moved away from specific aspects of training delivery (previously, mainly course focused) and introduced a set of skills. These skills were mainly 'soft' skills such as the ability to communicate, and the ability to work in a team. Time series for the key performance items used in the ANTA Annual Report were maintained.

The 2001 survey was conducted using the single frame from an electronic business listing. The survey was expanded to cover all employers with the same sub groups as for 1999, and an additional group of employers who had VET graduates hired more than two years previously.

A total of 6821 interviews were achieved across the populations with information by state, employer size and industry available.

Attachment B: Data items available from surveys from 2005

Table B1 List of data items available from the 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011 surveys

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011
Organisation characteristics:				
Industry (ANZSIC 93)	✓	✓	✓	
Industry (ANZSIC 06)		✓	✓	✓
State of operation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sector	✓	✓	✓	
Total number of employees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of permanent employees	✓	✓	✓	
Number of full-time employees	✓	✓	✓	
Occupational distribution of organisation	✓	✓		
Whether organisation is a registered training organisation (RTO)	✓	✓	✓	✓
If RTO, whether mainly provide training to own employees or to other organisations	✓	✓	✓	
Training strategy:				
Whether organisation has business plan	✓			
Staff training part of business plan	✓			
Importance of training to overall business strategy	✓			
Ways organisation currently determines training needs of staff	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rating of current skill level of employees relative to needs of the organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whether organisation experienced any difficulties recruiting staff in past 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for recruitment difficulties	✓	✓	✓	✓
Occupations of recruitment difficulties		✓		
What has organisation done to address these difficulties	✓	✓	✓	
Informal training:				
Organisation done any of following in last 12 months:	✓	✓	✓	✓
• supervisors provided informal training as required				
• provided/arranged for relevant training for new technology/equipment				
• provided training manuals or software for self-directed study				
• contributed to cost of university study				
• contributed to cost of VET study				
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement:				

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011
Whether organisation ever had jobs that require vocational qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons organisation (does not have/no longer has) specific jobs that require vocational qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓
Percentage of employees in organisation that had jobs requiring vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whether jobs require full or part qualification		✓	✓	✓
Occupations of employees that had jobs requiring vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation has specific jobs that require vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Importance of employing people with vocational qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓
Level of satisfaction with vocational qualifications in providing employees with skills required for job	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for dissatisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suggestions for improvements	✓			
Apprenticeships/traineeships:				
Whether organisation ever had employees undertaking apprenticeships/traineeships in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons organisation does not have apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whether know where to look for information about recruiting apprentice/trainee		✓	✓	
Percentage of apprentices/trainees who undertook formal training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expect number of apprentices/trainees to increase, stay the same, decrease in next three years		✓	✓	
Whether number of apprentices/trainees increased, stayed the same, decreased in last 12 months				✓
Expect number of apprentices/trainees to increase, stay the same, decrease in next 12 months				✓
Occupations of apprentices/trainees in last 12 months	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation has had apprentices/trainees in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Method of hiring apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for using a group training organisation to hire apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011
Types of organisations used to conduct formal training for apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of formal training for apprentices/trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for using main type of training provider	✓	✓	✓	
Level of satisfaction with the quality of training from main training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓
Importance of apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Level of satisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for dissatisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suggestions for improvements	✓			
Nationally recognised training:				
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons organisation does not have employees who have undertaken nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whether know where to look for information about nationally recognised training		✓	✓	
Percentage of employees provided with nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whether nationally recognised training was for full qualification or for specific subjects/modules		✓	✓	
If both, was the majority for a full qualification or for specific subjects/modules		✓	✓	✓
Expect amount of nationally recognised training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next three years		✓	✓	
Whether amount of nationally recognised training increased, stayed the same, decreased in last 12 months				✓
Expect amount of nationally recognised training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next 12 months				✓
Occupations of employees provided with nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Who conducted MAJORITY of nationally recognised training (external provider or internally)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011
Types of organisations used to conduct nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for using main type of training provider	✓	✓	✓	
Level of satisfaction with the quality of training from main training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓
Importance of training leading to a nationally recognised qualification	✓	✓	✓	✓
Level of satisfaction with nationally recognised training in providing employees with required skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for dissatisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suggestions for improvements	✓			
Unaccredited training:				
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Percentage of employees provided with unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expect amount of unaccredited training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next three years		✓	✓	
Whether amount of unaccredited training increased, stayed the same, decreased in last 12 months				✓
Expect amount of unaccredited training to increase, stay the same, decrease in next 12 months				✓
Occupations of employees provided with unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓	✓		
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Who conducted MAJORITY of unaccredited training (external provider or internally)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Types of organisations used to conduct unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for using main type of training provider	✓	✓	✓	
Level of satisfaction with the quality of training from main training provider	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whether comparable nationally recognised training available when choosing unaccredited training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons for choosing unaccredited training over nationally recognised training	✓	✓	✓	

Data item	2005	2007	2009	2011
Level of satisfaction with unaccredited training in providing employees with required skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overall improvements to the VET system:				
Suggestions for improvements to the VET system		✓	✓	

Table B2   List of data items available from the 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 surveys

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Organisation characteristics:																		
Industry (ANZSIC 06)	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
State of operation	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Total number of employees	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Whether organisation is a registered training organisation (RTO)	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
If RTO, whether mainly provide training to own employees or to other organisations	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Training strategy:																		
Whether organisation experienced any difficulties recruiting staff in past 12 months	✓			✓			✓			✓						✓		
Reasons for recruitment difficulties		✓			✓			✓		✓								
Occupations of recruitment difficulties																		
Proficiency of staff		✓		✓				✓										
Reasons staff not fully proficient		✓		✓				✓										
Impact on organisation performance if staff not fully proficient		✓		✓				✓										
Effect on organisation if staff not fully proficient		✓		✓				✓										
What organisation has done to cope with lack of staff proficiency		✓		✓				✓										
Whether talk to anyone external to the business about skill needs										✓								
Types of organisations or individuals talked to about skill needs										✓								
Informal training:																		
Organisation done any of following in last	✓			✓			✓			✓								

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
12 months: • supervisors provided informal training as required • provided/arranged for relevant training for new technology/equipment • provided training manuals or software for self-directed study • contributed to cost of university study • contributed to cost of VET study																		
Whether organisation provided informal, or on-the-job training as required in the last 12 months													✓			✓		
Reasons for not providing any training to employees in last 12 months													✓			✓		
Vocational qualifications as a job requirement:																		
Whether organisation ever had jobs that require vocational qualifications	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Percentage of employees in organisation that had jobs requiring vocational qualifications in last 12 months	✓			✓														
Reasons organisation has specific jobs that require vocational qualifications in last 12 months		✓			✓			✓			✓						✓	
Level of satisfaction with vocational qualifications in providing employees with skills required for job	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
Apprenticeships/traineeships:																		

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Whether organisation ever had employees undertaking apprenticeships/traineeships in last 12 months	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Whether the number of employees undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships in organisation has differed from previous years													✓					
Whether organisation had employees undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships in previous years													✓					
Whether the changes in the number of employees undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships was due to the impacts of COVID-19													✓					
Percentage of apprentices/trainees who undertook formal training in last 12 months	✓			✓														
Reasons organisation has had apprentices/trainees in last 12 months		✓			✓			✓			✓						✓	
Types of organisations used to conduct formal training for apprentices/trainees			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of formal training for apprentices/trainees			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Reasons for using main type of training provider			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Level of satisfaction with various aspects of training for apprentices/trainees from main provider			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Overall level of satisfaction with training for apprentices/trainees from main						✓			✓			✓			✓			✓

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
provider																		
Level of satisfaction with apprenticeships/traineeships in meeting skill needs	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
Nationally recognised training:																		
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Whether the number of employees undertaking nationally recognised training in organisation has differed from previous years													✓					
Whether organisation had employees undertaking nationally recognised training in previous years													✓					
Whether the changes in the number of employees undertaking nationally recognised training was due to the impacts of COVID-19													✓					
Percentage of employees provided with nationally recognised training in last 12 months	✓			✓														
Whether nationally recognised training was for full qualification or for specific subjects/modules		✓			✓			✓			✓								
If both, was the majority for a full qualification or for specific subjects/modules		✓			✓			✓			✓								

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake nationally recognised training		✓			✓			✓			✓						✓	
Who conducted MAJORITY of nationally recognised training (external provider or internally)			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Types of organisations used to conduct nationally recognised training			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of nationally recognised training			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Reasons for using main type of training provider			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Level of satisfaction with various aspects of nationally recognised training from main provider			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Overall level of satisfaction with nationally recognised training from main provider						✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Level of satisfaction with nationally recognised training in providing employees with required skills	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
Unaccredited training:																		
Whether organisation ever arranged or provided for employees to undertake unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Percentage of employees provided with unaccredited training in last 12 months	✓			✓														
Reasons organisation arranged for employees to undertake unaccredited		✓			✓			✓			✓						✓	

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
training																		
Who conducted MAJORITY of unaccredited training (external provider or internally)			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Types of organisations used to conduct unaccredited training			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Types of organisations used to conduct MAJORITY of unaccredited training			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓
Reasons for using main type of training provider			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Level of satisfaction with various aspects of unaccredited training from main provider			✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Overall level of satisfaction with unaccredited training from main provider						✓			✓			✓						✓
Whether comparable nationally recognised training available when choosing unaccredited training		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
Reasons for choosing unaccredited training over nationally recognised training		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
Level of satisfaction with unaccredited training in providing employees with required skills	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
Reasons for dissatisfaction		✓																
Anything further:																		
Anything further to add about the vocational education and training system	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
COVID related questions:																		
Whether organisation had new training requirements due to the impacts of													✓					

Data item	2013			2015			2017			2019			2021			2023		
	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B	Core	Non-core A	Non-core B
COVID-19																		
Reasons organisation had new training requirements													✓					
Key areas of training that new training requirements covered													✓					
Types of training used to meet new requirements due to the impacts of COVID-19													✓					
Reasons for choosing types of training to meet new requirements													✓					
Whether training priorities for the next 12 months are different to those of the last 12 months due to the impacts of COVID-19													✓*					
Reasons training priorities are different for the next 12 months due to the impacts of COVID-19													✓					
Whether expect the amount of training the organisation will provide in the next 12 months to change													✓*					
Reasons expect the amount of training to change in the next 12 months													✓					

*These questions in 2021 were randomly assigned to employers; that is the employer would either be asked if their training priorities would be different in the next 12 months compared with the last 12 months OR whether the amount of training they would provide in the next 12 months would be different.